

# Port Orford Free Press

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*A Publication of Citizens For A Free Port Orford*



David Brock Smith photo

## POR REPORT

The Port of Port Orford was closed and evacuated Saturday, the 25th of October 2014 as a result of a winter storm that was accompanied by Category 2 hurricane force winds which far exceeded forecast values. The National Data Buoy Center Station 46015 located 15 miles West of Port Orford recorded significant wave heights of nearly 30 feet. It is suspected that the hurricane force winds increased those wave heights to in excess of 40 feet prior to their arrival at Port Orford. This weather event, coupled with an elevated high tide level, caused massive damage to port infrastructure, private businesses, and the breakwater at a minimum. No reports of injury have been received. The port reopened with limited services roughly 36 hours later and the cleanup continues as I write this update.

Massive wave over-topping of the facility led to the total destruction of some buildings including the office of processor Hallmark Fisheries. Millions of gallons of seawater swept a shipping container owned by Hallmark into the harbor. Nor Cal Seafood also suffered damage to their buying station, but a light pole saved the structure from washing over, leaving it perched in a precarious manner hanging helplessly over the edge of the dock. Nor Cal also suffered losses in the tens of thousands of dollars range when power was interrupted to their live fish holding facility, killing thousands of pounds of live seafood product. Griff's on the Dock restaurant suffered flooding due to loss of roof and raw sea water flow. Early estimates from the above named tenants put losses at just under \$500,000. These are initial estimates and they should be expected to rise significantly.

Port offices were flooded with about two feet of seawater. Historic data and records have been hurried to a document drying facility. Most of the remaining contents are a total loss. One of the two main boat hoist cranes remains inoperable. The port's fuel delivery system has been damaged rendering fuel sales improbable until technicians can install a new computer control system at a cost exceeding \$10,000. The port has made a priority of repairing the system that filters all water runoff from the port. Our commitment to the environment remains strong. No known spillage or loss of any hazardous

material has occurred. The Port is not as of yet able to release an estimate of loss, but it is expected to rival that of the tenants which would likely sum at an amount of about \$1,000,000.00

The Port of Port Orford Commission has maintained a presence on site to assist management in the tall task of clean up, and negotiations with multiple insurance entities and government agencies. The commission went into emergency session at approximately 10 a.m. Sunday the 26th and remains in emergency session to affect any needed decision making in an immediate fashion. The board has recessed in the evening hours giving commissioners an opportunity for much needed rest. Sessions reconvene at 8 a.m. daily. I am proud of the level of dedication exhibited by the shorthanded commission, operating with only 3 of the 5 members through this event. One absent commissioner is on a scheduled vacation with family. I've heard nothing of the status of the other absent elected official. Fellow commissioners Bassett and Scaffo have given a stellar performance in the wake of this event and continue to do so.

The Army Corps of Engineers responded swiftly to requests from the port commission to assess extensive breakwater damage. Kate Groth, representing the corps, personally committed to me to seek emergency action to address the breakwater failure. The Corps also agreed to an immediate survey of harbor depths to determine the extent of shoaling associated with this event. It goes without saying this is of grave concern to our commission and community as it has been widely reported 35+% of our local economy is fishing industry related. Estimated breakwater repair costs hover at about \$10,000,000.00, with dredging costs expected in the half million dollar range.

The rugged people of Port Orford have rolled up their sleeves and are amazing in their tenacity. Volunteer efforts to clean Dock beach were headed by Jimbo Jennings. As president of the recently formed Port Orford Reorganized Fishermen's Association, Jimbo directed and led his association members in the effort starting at daybreak Sunday. I couldn't be more proud of the members. No other groups or entities were involved in the effort to protect the environment on our beach. BRAVO! fishermen, and a hardy thank

you. Other volunteers included Wayne Moore who used his equipment to remove massive boulders that were flung about the dock by the raw power of the ocean, as well as remove tons of building debris that remain twisted about the facility. Joe Marsh also used his machinery to remove the shipping container that washed off the dock and on to the beach. It would be impossible to name all the volunteers involved in the clean up effort, but I have attempted to log their hours and estimate them at 200 man hours.

The Port Commission declared a state of emergency through resolution, commissioner Bassett and myself delivered that resolution, and gave testimony to Curry County Commissioners today, the 28th, at a special board meeting. Curry County also declared a state of emergency through resolution. Both declarations are on Governor Kitzhaber's desk at this time. These declarations included requests for emergency funds. FEMA dollars are the target of these requests. County Commissioner David Brock Smith has shown great leadership and dedication to our community by initiating and seeing through the requests. Having a County Commissioner from our community has once again shown to be an invaluable asset. I for one will remember his actions and commitment to our community, and fishing industry when and if he seeks reelection. I have personally received multiple phone calls from Mr. Smith through this event, including several from him well into the midnight hour. In short, we are lucky to be so well represented. Commissioner Itzen was also quite keen to assist and support our critical port infrastructure and fishing industry. His compassion was obvious. County Commissioner Susan Brown was absent.

The first storm of the season has passed and the clean up continues in the capable hands of port manager Steve Courtier, who also deserves our recognition for his effectiveness and dedication through this disaster (welcome to Port Orford Steve). I personally expect multiple events of this magnitude to occur during the Pacific's El Nino winter pattern. We have not seen this warming pattern in a half dozen years as I recall.. Hang on folks, this is just the beginning.

Brett Webb  
 Commissioner, Port of Port Orford

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF CURRY, OREGON

In the Matter of Declaring a Local  
Emergency in Curry County and  
Requesting a Governor's  
Declaration of a State of Emergency

RESOLUTION R201417

WHEREAS, on October 25, 2014, a severe storm event swept through Curry County threatening life and destroying property; and

WHEREAS, the severe storm event has caused significant infrastructure damage to the Port of Port of Port Orford, Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative Inc., Curry County and Local Residents; and

WHEREAS, the severe storm event has displaced local residents with trees falling on their homes and uprooting has caused damage to service utility infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative, Inc. preliminary damage report has costs being fairly significant and taking several weeks to fix all damaged infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the Port of Port Orford's preliminary infrastructure damage and loss assessment includes, but is not limited to the loss of structures in the ocean, significant structural and flood damage to remaining structures and the Port Office, damage to vessels, electrical systems, fuel station and possibly to the oil separator filter media; and

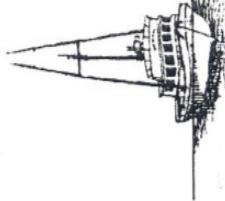
WHEREAS, the Port Commission has declared an emergency for the Port of Port Orford; and channel; and

WHEREAS, the breakwater at the Port of Port Orford sustained extensive structural damage due to the severe storm event which has prompted the United States Army Corps of Engineers to request Emergency Action; and

WHEREAS, the severe storm event and subsequent loss of critical infrastructure at the Port of Port Orford threatens the life and safety of the fleet and has compromised the economic vitality of the local marine fishery which has fundamental economic benefits to Curry and Coos Counties, Oregon and the west coast of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Port Commission of the Port of Port Orford and the Curry County Board of Commissioners have determined that there is a need for state assistance to respond to and recover from the severe storm event and subsequent emergency condition;

State of Oregon }  
County of Curry }  
I hereby certify that the within is a  
true copy of the original record on  
file in my office and is duly  
Dated: 10/28/2014  
Renee Kolen, Curry County Clerk  
By Deputy Ass't. Clerk



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**Resolution 2014-6**

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS FOR THE PORT OF PORT ORFORD, OREGON**

In the Matter of Declaring a Local Emergency )  
at the Port Of Port Orford and requesting a )  
Declaration of a State of Emergency )

WHEREAS, ON October 25<sup>th</sup>, a category 2 hurricane force storm far exceeding forecast , devastated the Port Of Port Orford, threatening life and property; and

WHEREAS, the storm, high winds, and heavy seas have caused extensive damage to the Port Of Port Orford, and tenants, and vital commerce dependent on the Port; and WHEREAS, the Port Commission has determined that there is a need for financial assistance to respond to and recover from the damages caused by wind and waves; and

WHEREAS, we are in the process of assessing the full extent of the damage

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that**

The Port of Port Orford Commissioners declares that a Local Emergency exists for the Port of Port Orford.

Furthermore, it is requested that the Board of County Commissioners declare a State of Emergency and consider the Port of Port Orford an "emergency area" as provided for in ORS 401.<sup>165</sup> and provide such assistance as requested and available.

It is further requested that the Board of County Commissioners request additional assistance from the governor of the State of Oregon, if needed.

DATED this 28<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2014

PORT OF PORT ORFORD COMMISSIONERS  
David A. Bassett, P.E. President  
  
Brett Webb, Commissioner

Sam Scaffo, Commissioner